

Roman Lang - A Prologue

Are there recurring structures that are transferable to other conditions and disciplines and that always correspond to each other? Are systems volatile and changeable? Beginning an essay with these big questions may at first seem like an emotive deception in Roman Lang's technoid wall paintings. The painterly objects, sometimes referred to by the artist as shaped boards and thus alluding to the mostly polygonal picture panels made of commercially available wooden boards, seem abstract and without narration. Here, colored surfaces meet gray lines, acrylic paint meets textured spray paint, and hard edges meet the grain of natural and untreated wood. Inevitably, the carousel of associations begins to turn in mind: References to Constructivism, Concrete Art, Hard-Edge Painting, seem to resonate in harmonious polyphony as well as influences from graffiti, applied design and a certain do-it-yourself DIY store mentality. High and low stand confidently side by side.

Subtly placed imperfections, however, deny a strict classification in an art-historical tradition: a supposed connecting line runs into nothing, a feigned illusionistic depth suddenly makes no sense; elsewhere a splash of paint has been left standing on the otherwise perfectly crafted object just as much as the fine pencil line of a preliminary drawing. What remains are irritation and open questions: why does the artist not work consistently and cleanly here? It is precisely at this point that the construct begins to falter. The works of Roman Lang do not want to claim a perfect illusionistic illusion or a completed perfection. On the contrary, the fragmentary and the processual are at the center here and literally demonstrate the painting. Roman Lang dissects this classical art genre into its basic elements of background, surface, line, color and reassembles them anew.

The artist constructs without a fixed basic framework in the form of a fixed vocabulary. The works do not refer to external structures and do not visualize any concrete systemic occurrences; only the sampling of the classical artistic dualisms (positive/negative, line/area, artificial/natural) enables an abstract, yet open reference system. In different variations, this results in pictorial patterns, structures and systems that are characterized by their own immanent logic. At the same time, however, the gentle impression of changeability hovers over everything, with which the smallest modification can transform the "narrative" of the entire picture.

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Through these pictorial means, a contemporary consciousness is expressed that can provide information about political and social power relations. The works are not to be understood as assertions, but as an invitation to active participation: to question a given structure and to complete or continue a system. Roman Lang's works reflect a completely anti-hierarchical, liberal and fundamentally democratic attitude, which propagates the equal and equal coexistence and, despite supposed flaws, brings about an aesthetic unity.

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